

This is not just withholding payment for a period of time; this is a complete forfeiture.

I propose a balanced budget amendment so we are forced to stop kicking the can down the road and will create a fiscal path that will allow the next generation to thrive.

I also have a bill I call the Citizen Legislature Anti-Corruption Reform Act, or CLEAN Act, a bill that ends congressional pensions for life and requires this body to debate and act on single-issue legislation, codify that all laws passed by Congress apply to all of its Members, reform the broken gerrymandering process by moving all redistricting to independent, nonpartisan, citizen commissions, and to expand access to political party primaries to include both independents and non-affiliated voters.

Is there anyone in this Chamber who does not believe that these measures will make our country a better place? Is there anyone in this Chamber who does not believe these measures will result in a healthier democracy and a system of government where our people have more faith and trust in? Is there anyone here who believes that more citizens serving in this body and more citizens participating in their government would not be a breath of fresh air for our Nation?

If you agree with our ideas, I urge you to join me and cosponsor these measures, join the Congressional Citizen Legislature Caucus, and advocate for these reforms. Share your vision with your constituents because they need to know that our Nation is not resigned to the status quo.

Mr. Speaker, Washington needs fewer politicians and more independent voices focused on serving the American people. That is the reason we are here. Let's not let them down. The time is now to answer their call to fix this system so we can start addressing the challenges that we face as a nation.

THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor for me to stand here in the well of the House to know that I am one of less than 450 people in the world who have been accorded the preeminent privilege of standing in the well of the Congress of the United States of America.

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It is an honor to stand here at this podium with a rostrum behind me with the word "Justice" etched in it. Right behind me, "Justice" is etched into the rostrum. You can't see it at home because it is low, and it is beneath the view of the camera.

Today, I want to talk about justice, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk about justice and the Justice Department. I do

this, Mr. Speaker, because we have a President-elect who has said he will be a law and order President. I want to make a distinction between law and order and justice, and I want to attribute this to the Justice Department versus a law and order department.

Mr. Speaker, you can have law and order in a dungeon, but you won't have justice. There is law and order in North Korea, but you don't have justice. Justice, Mr. Speaker, is what this Department is all about. It is not the law and order department. One of the best ways to explain it is to harken back to something that was called to our attention yesterday at the hearing for the nominee to become the head of the Justice Department.

When the Honorable JOHN LEWIS spoke, he went back to 1965, and the crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. On that day, George Wallace—one of the great segregationists of his time and, perhaps, the greatest segregationist of his time—had made it perspicuously clear to his troops that, if you maintain order, there will be law to protect you. As a result, those troops beat the marches all the way back to the church where they started. They were peaceful protesters. The Honorable JOHN LEWIS said he thought he might die. That is what law and order meant to a good many people in the South.

Law and order without justice is what took place on that day; but thank God there was a judge, the Honorable Frank M. Johnson. The Honorable Frank M. Johnson issued the order to allow those marches to move from Selma to Montgomery, and he did it notwithstanding his classmate George Wallace having said that they were banned from doing it. This was justice, not law and order alone. This is our fear—that the Justice Department will go back to the hands of someone who may consider it a law and order department and a department in which there is a belief that you can do anything to maintain the order and that there will be law to support your actions and activities.

Mr. Speaker, we must protect the notion of justice for all people in this country. This is why I was there yesterday to lend my support to Senator BOOKER when he spoke about justice and when he indicated that he could not support the nominee. I was honored to be there, seated right near the Honorable JOHN LEWIS when he said he could not support the nominee. I was also honored to be there with the head of the Congressional Black Caucus, CEDRIC RICHMOND, when he indicated: If this nominee is a civil rights advocate, why is the civil rights community so opposed to him? I think those were some very sage comments.

I must tell you that we in this country have come too far to allow the Justice Department to become the law and order department.

RUSSIA AND PRESIDENT PUTIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today as co-chair and founding member of the Polish, Hungarian, and Ukrainian House Caucuses.

I am also a strong defender of NATO and of its purpose in linking the free nations of Europe and the United States through this historic, hard-won alliance and security treaty among Europe's sovereign nations that respect the rule of law and our shared passion for liberty.

Our Nation and NATO's members paid the ultimate price in the last century for our priceless gift of liberty. We won the cold war, and our most treasured democratic values of life, liberty, freedom of assembly, press, and religion are under siege today by a predatory and repressive Russia. Go no further than any major business in your district and ask them how many times they are hacked daily by Russian predators—to get a sense of what is going on.

My purpose this morning is to remind our citizenry of the continuing and major, real threat to our NATO alliance and to the destabilization of Europe by Russia that necessitates our strengthening the alliance, not weakening it, to ward off Vladimir Putin's expansionist dreams.

I must say I am concerned by our President-elect's loose talk about Russia. His naive assumption that personal friendships with Russia's oligarchs—some of whom are active members of Russia's notorious mafia—can overcome strategic, expansionist imperatives that fill Vladimir Putin's mind are truly not in America's interest.

So let's review some recent history.

Domestically, Mr. Putin has suppressed the basic freedoms of the Russian people. His leadership has resulted in countless infringements of human rights violations and other actions that directly conflict with our foundational values in Western democracies.

Putin has an aggressive and very hostile foreign policy toward us—toward the United States—and our top allies. Russia has invaded neighboring sovereign countries, including the Republics of Georgia and Ukraine. Russia has threatened and harassed U.S. military personnel and diplomats overseas, not in the last century, now, orchestrating an anti-American propaganda campaign—the largest since World War II—both in our country and around the world; and it is conducting cyber warfare, as I speak, against our country, our government, our interests, as well as European governments; against political institutes; against our think tanks; against our State voter data systems, as our intelligence services have just informed us; and against our cities and counties, journalists, and individuals.